

An Unexpected Marriage

by MiniNerva

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****An Unexpected Marriage****

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A/N â€" Another thing my cousin and I wrote over the Easter holidays â€" but this one's better. It was meant to be a bit silly, too, but it ended up being more serious. Oh, and I don't own any of the characters. Well, I own Ruby and Hagrid's unnamed wife, and Donebus Walvin.

"I'm glad Hagrid finally found a woman as large as he is," said Minerva McGonagall, hefting his one-hundred pound infant. She grimaced and handed the child to Dumbledore, who was standing next to her.

"Yes," said Dumbledore distractedly. "Hello, Ruby."

"Uncle Alby," said Ruby. He grimaced and put her down. She toddled over to Minerva, holding out her arms.

"Aunt Nervy."

Minerva knelt down to the child's level. She met Dumbledore's eyes over Ruby's head. He looked amused.

"Does that make us a couple?" he asked, raising one silver eyebrow. Minerva blushed and hugged Ruby to hide it.

"Perhaps," she said a moment later, getting up. She felt herself go

pinker as she did something she'd always wanted to do. She flung out a hand toward Dumbledore's face and said dramatically,

"Kiss my hand."

"Gladly," he murmured, and did so. Just then, someone behind them whistled. They whirled around to see Hagrid, striding toward them. He bent down and easily lifted Ruby.

"Daddy," she squealed. He cradled her in his massive arms and said, "How's daddy's baby?" He noticed Minerva and Dumbledore standing in an embarrassed silence. "Say," he said, "Why don't you two go out to dinner?" I think you's need a break from Ruby and the school."

"An excellent idea, Hagrid," Dumbledore said. He tucked Minerva's right arm through his left one, and led her from the room.

"Where are we going exactly?" Minerva inquired. Dumbledore noticed that she was not protesting the idea of going out to dinner with him.

"The Pegasus Inn," he replied, releasing her. "It's dressy, by the way. " He strode off, calling over his shoulder, "I'll meet you in the entrance hall in half an hour."

Forty minutes later, Minerva hurried down to the entrance hall, where Dumbledore stood, tapping one foot on the stone floor impatiently.

"Sorry I'm late, Albus," she said breathlessly. "But really, half an hour, for a woman . . . "

"Quite all right," said Dumbledore distractedly, eyeing her. She was wearing a green, sparkly dress. It was long and fitted. Her hair was done up in French twist, with tiny braids on each side which came up to meet the twist. Tiny emerald earrings flashed in the low light as she turned her head, and she had exchanged her glasses for contacts. Dumbledore was wearing a snappy black tux with a crisp purple shirt and gold cuff links. He took Minerva's arm, and, as they made to leave, said, "Have you ever noticed how beautiful the Forbidden Forest is, with its deep green foliage and mystery?" He dropped a cloak over her shoulders. "You are that beautiful tonight, Minerva." He held open the door for her.

"Er, th-thank you," she stammered, picking her way down the stone steps.

Dumbledore retrieved his Nimbus from the broom shed, and a moment later it was hovering obediently in front of Minerva.

"Ladies first," said Dumbledore with a smile, helping Minerva onto the broom. She slid back, and he hopped on agilely in front of her. She very tentatively put her arms around his waist. She had never liked flying much; it made her dizzy.

The Nimbus lifted off the ground and shot upward. Minerva's grip tightened instinctively around Albus' ribcage. They leveled out, flying just below the lowest clouds, but Minerva didn't loosen her grip. She didn't get the impression that Dumbledore really wanted her to.

It was a short flight (Thank God, thought Minerva). They touched down in front of a magnificent old Manor on the outskirts of Hogsmeade. A young witch took their cloaks, and they joined the small crowd of people in the dining and ballrooms.

"Dinner first, or dancing?" asked Dumbledore.

"Dancing," said Minerva impulsively, and they wove their way out to the middle of the dance floor.

They were both excellent dancers, much to their mutual surprise, and the first few dances past quickly. After that they took a break and had a few glasses of champagne, then went back to dancing. Three dances later, she broke again, and, to her great surprise, Minerva was asked to dance by a handsome young man who introduced himself as Donebus Walvin. She glanced at Dumbledore, who waved a hand debonairly, and accepted.

Dumbledore watched the two of them dance, standing alone by the drinks table, sipping champagne. Minerva's dress sparkled in the light, and he realized for the first time just how pretty Minerva was. For she was very pretty. She just hid it normally, under her square spectacles and billowing robes, her tight bun and stern expression.

Here, the stern expression was replaced by one of delight, and the green dress accentuated the fine figure he had never known she had. Her hairstyle, the long dress swirling about her ankles, the emerald earrings, the satiny green pumps, it all added to her elegance.

Just then the dance came to an end. Donebus Walvin bowed to Minerva and kissed her hand; she thanked him and made her way back across the floor to Dumbledore. Her face was flushed with happiness, and her eyes sparkled like Dumbledore had never seen them do before. He smiled at her and held out his hand as the music started up again. She smiled back and took it.

There was something there when Dumbledore had his arms around her that hadn't been there when she was dancing with Donebus Walvin. It was like magic. Minerva giggled to herself softly.

"Of course it is, silly," she thought. Dumbledore smiled and pulled her closer.

Minerva felt she could dance forever. Just looking at Dumbledore right now made her smile softly and something stirred inside her. The song ended and they decided to get something to eat. Minerva had lamb with curry sauce, a small salad, and water to drink. Dumbledore had steak (medium-rare) a potato, and brandy to drink.

They talked about the coming school year and the students. The conversation soon turned toward their personal lives.

"No, I've never been married," Minerva told Dumbledore.

"I can't understand why," he said.

"Oh, thank you for the compliment, but I guess I just never met anyone I wanted to marry."

They both leaned across the table to reach the salt. They soon forgot all about the salt, and thought only about only each other. They moved closer, closer, until "â€"

"Would you like anything else?" the waiter asked.

They jerked away from each other, badly startled.

"No, we're fine," Minerva said shortly. The waiter nodded and faded away.

They went back to their dinner, but the moment had been broken, and throughout the rest of the meal, it was not regained.

They left without having dessert, and flew back to Hogwarts in silence. Minerva sat very close to Albus, and wondered where the magic had gone.

It was a smooth landing, much to Minerva's relief, and they stood outside for a moment after Dumbledore's broom was put away.

"The stars are certainly beautiful tonight," commented Minerva. (Yes, the magic was back!)

"Not half as beautiful as you, m'dear." He put his arms around her, thinking she might be chilly. Minerva gave Dumbledore a soft smile, and he smiled back at her. She shivered, and he held her closer. He looked down at her, about to say something, but before either of them could say a word, they moved closer and lips met. They lingered for a moment, then released. Minerva looked down at the ground, embarrassed, but Dumbledore turned her face back up toward him and said, "You need not be so modest, milady."

As they turned to go inside, Minerva said, "Thank you for a wonderful evening, Albus. Perhaps we shall do this again."

"I do hope so," said Dumbledore softly, and they went their separate ways.

The weeks passed by, and Minerva thought about Dumbledore often. She wondered when they would be able to go out again. Then one day, Dumbledore asked her if she would like to take a walk with him that night. She accepted gladly.

They met in the entrance hall a half past eight. Minerva was wearing her customary robes, but she had left her hair down. It shone softly in the moonlight. She had left her glasses off, and hadn't bothered to put contacts in, so everything was a bit blurred.

They walked down to the lake. The reflection of the stars sparkled on the water's still surface. They sat down in the soft grass by the bank, and Minerva lay back, looking up at the stars.

"This was very nice of you, Albus. I do enjoy this sort of thing. And of course, I do enjoy talking with you."

"Well, to tell the truth, Minerva," said Dumbledore nervously. "There was a reason I asked you to come."

She checked the clock that was floating above the hook her dress was hanging on: eleven o'clock. She had better get dressed and check on her bridesmaids, who were in the connecting room.

She sighed and got to work on the project that was getting dressed for her wedding.

[illegible]

Penelope Sprout and Poppy Pomfrey turned their heads as Minerva strode in.

"Everything going all right?" she asked them, her eyes quickly taking in the room and its contents. All three bouquets were lying on a small glass table set a little to the left of the middle of the room.

The two bridesmaids assured Minerva that everything was running like a well-oiled piece of machinery.

"Good," Minerva said absently. There was a moment of silence.

"I don't think I've told you how happy I am for you," Poppy said finally. She embraced Minerva as Penelope seconded that sentiment. Poppy released Minerva and stood away from her, looking at her intently.

"You look wonderful," she said.

"Thank you," said Minerva. She gave Poppy another heartfelt hug, then glanced at the clock. "Well, I suppose we'd better head to the back of the church."

They walked out of the room together and headed down the stairs, laughing and talking like a trio of young girls.

[illegible]

Dumbledore straightened his collar and surveyed himself in the mirror. He was apparently satisfied, for he turned away, then headed into the next room to collect his best man.

Snape, too, was staring at his reflection in the mirror. He did not move when Dumbledore came in, but watched in the glass as the older man approached him.

"Ready?" Dumbledore said brightly.

Snape nodded, turning away from his reflection at last. It was hard to tell whether or not he was pleased with his appearance.

"Let's get this show on the road, then." Dumbledore's voice successfully concealed his nerves. He took Snape's elbow and led him out of the room.

The wedding party made their way outside amid much laughter and love. Minerva and Dumbledore walked with their arms about each other, caught up in a wave of euphoria that seemed unbreakable.

Everyone Apparated into Hogsmeade, then took the carriages back to Hogwarts, where the reception would be held.

The Great Hall looked magnificent. There was a space cleared in the middle for dancing, and a long table of food where the staff table usually sat, and there were smaller tables, each seating about a dozen people, scattered around the edge of the dance floor

The wedding cake sat in the place of honor on the food table. It was a towering confection: ten layers of marble cake with white icing, and tiny, moving figures on top. Minerva stared delightedly at the small version of herself, parading around on the top of the cake, arm in arm with a miniature Dumbledore. The real Dumbledore smiled and took her hand, and they cut the cake together.

They fed each other the traditional first bite, then Poppy took over and distributed pieces for all the guests.

Once the cutting of the cake was over, music began to play, emanating from nowhere. Minerva and Dumbledore moved alone onto the dance floor.

As they started to dance, Minerva was still having trouble believing that this man, this wonderful, tender, compassionate man, was her husband. He was hers for all time, as she was his.

She closed her eyes, completely caught up in the music and the scent and feel of her husband. He leaned forward slightly, and she felt his breath on the side of her face.

Other couples were coming out onto the floor now: Snape and Sinistra, Mr. and Mrs. Fudge, Remus Lupin and Penelope Sprout, Ludo Bagman and Poppy Pomfrey. Soon nearly everyone was dancing.

A few hours later, Minerva and Dumbledore slipped out, unnoticed. Snape met them outside. He had the carriage ready that would take them back to Hogsmeade. From Hogsmeade they would Apparate to London, where they would catch a plane and fly into Philadelphia. They would rent a car at the airport and drive to Stone Harbor, New Jersey, for their honeymoon.

Dumbledore shook Snape's hand, thanking him for acting as best man. Minerva, too, shook hands with Snape, then kissed him on his sallow cheek. She turned quickly back to Dumbledore, and so did not see the slow flush spreading upward from Snape's neck before he turned to go back inside.

"Severus," Dumbledore called after him. Snape turned, looking a question at Dumbledore.

"Make sure everyone parties until some ungodly hour in the morning, will you?" he said, then handed Minerva into the carriage.

"You look lovely, you know," he said softly as the carriage began to move.

"Thank you," said Minerva, just as softly. "So do you. You look handsome, I mean."

Dumbledore smiled but did not speak. Minerva just sat there, unsure of herself. She wasn't quite sure what one was supposed to say to one's new husband.

But in the end she did not say anything. He drew her close to him in the dark privacy of the carriage, her skirts rustling as she settled into him, and he simply held her. She rested her head on his shoulder, and he stroked her cheek with a long gentle finger. Their lips met again; the softest, barest flutter of a kiss. Minerva laid her cheek against her husband's, and they stayed like that until the carriage pulled into Hogsmeade.

[illegible]

They changed out of their wedding clothes when they arrived in Hogsmeade. Then they Apparated to Platform 9 ¾, crossed through the barrier, and took a Muggle cab to the airport.

Minerva thoroughly enjoyed the ride to the airport. Dumbledore pointed out all the Muggle contraptions as they drove through the city.

It was a short trip to the airport, and soon after they were on the plane, taking off into the horizon.

The newlyweds began to talk about their life together. They planned to live at Hogwarts during the school year, of course, but they planned to simply do what they wanted and go where they wanted during the summer. This conversation kept them occupied for quite some time, and then they each caught a few hours sleep.

The plane landed smoothly in Philadelphia several hours later. Minerva and Dumbledore disembarked, collected their luggage, and went to rent a car.

They ended up with a bright blue Volkswagen Bug, and Dumbledore insisted on driving. So they threw their suitcases in the back seat and set off, stopping at a McDonald's drive-thru for a bite to eat. Minerva didn't hit it off very well with the greasy fast food, but her new husband devoured hers as well as his own. They pulled out onto the highway, and that was when things started to get frightening.

Dumbledore had driven before, but not often, and the last time he had been behind the wheel of a Muggle car had been almost ten years before. He had certainly never driven in traffic such as he was encountering now, but he ignored it and simply drove as if it were not there. Minerva found herself clutching the dashboard and staring nervously through the windshield at the cars all around them. The conversation went something like this:

"Watch that car."

"I see it, Minerva."

"Go around it then!"

Here Dumbledore swerved around a black Mercedes, and they both fell silent. A moment later —

"Albus, stop playing with the windows."

Dumbledore gave his wife a hurt look and desisted.

"The road, Albus!" Minerva said urgently.

"I know, Minerva. I'm not going to crash."

"Albus, look at the road, dammit!"

A horn blared. Dumbledore hit the brakes and swerved around a convertible whose driver was giving him the finger. At this point, Minerva insisted that she drive the rest of the way.

A few hours later, they arrived in Stone Harbor. They pulled up outside a large house on the corner of Third Avenue and 90th Street. It was pink, with a white scalloped roof, and the effect was wonderful. It was the most appealing house in Stone Harbor. It was called the Rolling Waves Bed and Breakfast, and the Dumbledores had reservation for two weeks.

The interior was just as magnificent as the exterior, beginning with a slightly curved staircase, the banisters matching the outside railings. The host and hostess were an affable couple called Martha and Don Raybar. Martha showed them their room, Don brought in their luggage, and then they left the odd-looking couple alone.

Minerva and Dumbledore collapsed onto the bed together for a few hours of sleep. Dumbledore dropped off immediately, and as Minerva lay next to him, it struck her that this was the first time they had lain side by side as husband and wife. She rested her head next to his on the pillow, draped an arm over his chest, and slept.

It was mid-afternoon when they reawakened. Minerva went into the bathroom and took a shower while Dumbledore began to unpack his clothes.

After a while, Minerva came back into the room with one towel wrapped around her hair and another wrapped around her body. This was Dumbledore's first really intimate glance at Minerva, and he found himself watching her as she crossed the room. His eyes lingered for a moment on the swell of her breasts under the towel, and he felt a tightening sensation in his loins. He turned away, smiling ruefully into his now empty suitcase, thinking, _I may be a famous wizard, but I'm not more than a man._ He threw the suitcase into the closet and took himself and his thoughts to the shower.

Minerva dressed quickly in a light blue sleeveless sweater top with a mock turtleneck, and a black miniskirt. She put her hair up in a bun, then pulled a few things out of suitcase and began to put them away.

A few minutes later Dumbledore came out of the bathroom. Minerva put some makeup on while Dumbledore dressed, and soon they were ready.

They strolled around Stone Harbor for a time, acquainting themselves with the town. They stopped at Fudge Kitchen, where Dumbledore bought a pound containing every strange flavor the shop made, and then they went to dinner.

The place where they ate was called Henny's. It was decorated in a nautical sort of way, and served mostly seafood. Minerva and Dumbledore ordered fried flounder and crab cakes respectively, and shared them in the style of newlyweds everywhere.

They finished their meal with two glasses of excellent wine, and left the restaurant. The sun was going down now, and town was quickly becoming more crowded.

"Shall we take a walk on the beach?" Dumbledore murmured.

"Mmm," Minerva murmured back, in the affirmative. He took her arm and they headed out of town.

The beach looked magnificent in the low light of the setting sun. It was almost deserted but for the seagulls and there was a cool breeze springing up from the water. Minerva left her shoes at the edge of the sand, and released her bun so that her black hair fanned out behind her in the wind.

They walked hand in hand along the sandy shoreline as the sun reached its end and set on the water. It was soon dark, but the stars and the moon lit up the sky. Minerva and Dumbledore gazed up at the stars, then into each other's eyes. She could feel his gaze traveling through every inch of her body, reaching into the depths of her soul, and destroying everything that was hate and fear, leaving only love and happiness to heal her and for her to bathe in. She felt as if an unknown force was pulling her closer to him.

Apparently he felt the same way, because he leaned in too, and they kissed, standing still in each other's arms under the power of the ocean and the moon.

[illegible]

The next morning dawned bright and clear. Minerva woke early, disentangled herself from the blankets and her spouse's limbs, and went to dress for the day.

Today she selected a pair of white jeans and a sea green T-shirt from her suitcase, which she still hadn't completely unpacked, and put them on. She put her hair up in a high ponytail, slipped on a pair of sneakers, and went down to the beach to be alone for a while.

Dumbledore woke about two hours later, but was still abed when Minerva burst in, sparkling with more vivacity than he'd seen around her in years.

"I've been to the beach," she said.

"I see that," Dumbledore replied, his eyes on her sandy footwear. She

followed his eyes, then kicked her shoes off and sat down on the bed. Dumbledore sat up, the blankets falling away from his bare chest.

"I went for a run," Minerva told him breathlessly. "I haven't run like that in years." She leaned over and kissed her husband on the mouth. He pulled her down among the blankets and pinned her down with his body.

[illegible]

Some time later, they were sitting downstairs, eating breakfast. When they had finished, they decided to go miniature golfing.

So they went to the Tee Time Miniature Golf Course, down by Hoy's and Atlantic Books. They paid six dollars each, got their clubs and golf balls (green for Minerva, pink for Dumbledore) and started on the first hole.

Dumbledore went first. He hit the ball with enough force to best Tiger Woods. The pink ball flew up, up over the fence and soared down toward the street. Minerva stared, speechless, at the ball as it flew through the air. It fell, with the tinkling crash of broken glass, through the window of Klothes Kove. Minerva turned to her husband, dumbfounded.

"I seem to have been a bit forceful," he said in a bemused voice.

"_A bit?" Minerva burst into laughter. "Albus, it's done like this." She put her ball down, hit it gently with her club, and it banked off the far end of the green and went right into the hole. Minerva gave Dumbledore a satisfied look.

"Ah," he said. "I see." He looked out over the street. There were people gathered around the broken window of Klothes Kove. One of them detached himself from the crowd and started running across the street towards them.

"Ah," said Dumbledore again. "They come seeking retribution, is assume." He dug in his pocket, and when a short, fat man came puffing up the stairs, Dumbledore was proffering a one-hundred-dollar bill and abject apologies.

The man accepted both and stomped back down the stairs in a foul temper. Dumbledore went and got himself another golf ball, and they moved on to hole number two.

Dumbledore caught on to miniature golfing extremely quickly. He got six holes-in-one out of eighteen holes, next to Minerva's two. By the end they were pleasantly hot and sweaty. It was mid-afternoon by that time, and they were both ravenously hungry. They walked back through the town toward the bed-and-breakfast, stopping only at the bookstore.

That was a rather interesting visit. The first thing they saw upon walking in was a stack of colorful paperbacks â€" _Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets._

"I can't understand why every man who's ever met you hasn't wanted to

take you to his bed."

Minerva drew away quickly, her face a picture of injured dignity.

"Albus â€" " she exclaimed, then giggled in spite of herself. "Don't be ridiculous."

Dumbledore moved closer to her again and slipped an arm about her waist.

"Why not?" he said. "That's what honeymoons are for. Anyway " he tightened his arm around her waist " " I think you're very sexy."

Minerva decided to take this with a grain of salt, though the conversation was patently ridiculous.

"Prove it, old man," she whispered.

Dumbledore's look brightened. "Gladly," he murmured, but at that moment a voice called, "Dumbledore, party of two," and they went inside.

They were seated a relatively private table in a corner. Minerva ordered New England clam chowder and Crab Imperial. Dumbledore ordered Manhattan clam chowder and roast beef. Both drank two glasses of premium wine.

The topics of conversation varied, but the most memorable was of them having children.

"Just think, Minerva, I'll be a father after one hundred!" Dumbledore exclaimed.

"But, oh Albus, I'd be so scared. I think I would be baffled by the behavior of a young child. I'm afraid I would make a horrible mother and our sweet little boy will grow up to be the next Voldemort," Minerva finished with an excited hand gesture.

Dumbledore took another mouthful of roast beef. "You'll be a wonderful mother," he said with his mouth full. He grinned, then became serious and said,

"Minerva, every mother is a little nervous at first. I have complete faith in you. Besides, one of us has to be responsible."

She just smiled and continued eating her dinner.

[illegible]

Out on the boardwalk, Dumbledore insisted that they get cotton candy first. This they did, then strolled arm in arm towards the roller coasters.

Dumbledore pointed out a particularly horrendous-looking one and informed his wife that they were going to ride it.

"Albus," Minerva said, eyeing the roller coaster with great trepidation, "Why did you buy me such an expensive dinner if you intended for me to lose it in this fashion?"

"Nonsense," Dumbledore said briskly. He seized Minerva's hand, tossed the remainder of his cotton candy into a nearby trash can, and headed determinedly toward the monstrous roller coaster. Minerva protested vociferously, but Dumbledore overrode her and she reluctantly boarded it.

In the end Minerva didn't lose her dinner, though at one point she clapped her hands over her mouth to guard against that possibility. Dumbledore quite enjoyed himself, and it wasn't until they were back on firm ground that he realized just how much Minerva had not enjoyed that ride.

He grasped her elbow as she took her first few shaky steps, but did not let go as her stride smoothed out.

"I'm sorry," he apologized. "I shouldn't have pressed you into going on that roller coaster. I just thought â€" well, I enjoy them so â€"

"It's all right," Minerva said shakily. "I'll be fine. Just â€" could we do something a bit more tame now?"

"Why yes, of course. Name it and we'll do it!" Dumbledore said jovially.

Minerva gave him a weak smile and suggested that they go on the Ferris wheel. Dumbledore agreed readily, they bought enough tickets for two on the Ferris wheel, and walked until they arrived at the aforementioned destination.

As Dumbledore helped Minerva into their own car, he noticed a serene look on her face. He sat down next to her, and they started to move up. They kept moving, and when they reached the top, they had a perfect view of the boardwalk in one direction and the ocean in the other.

It was quite windy, and Minerva started to shiver uncontrollably. Dumbledore put his jacket around her and pulled her closer to him. She continued to stare in the direction of the ocean, and a small smile was in place on her lips.

"You really love the ocean, don't you?" came Dumbledore's soft question into her thoughts.

"Yes, it mesmerizes me. It is always changing, yet always the same. So calm, yet so raging. I must confess I am completely in love with the ocean."

She rested her head on his chest and he looked at her perfect face, wondering if this dream could be real.

[illegible]

They were silent on the drive home. Neither of them said anything, in

fact, until they were back at the bed-and-breakfast. Dumbledore confronted his wife as she was changing into her nightdress.

"Tell me the truth, Minerva," he said. "Do you really want a child?"

Minerva held his gaze without speaking for a moment, then said, "Yes, Albus, I do."

Dumbledore simply looked into her eyes in silence. He couldn't quite think what to say. Finally he just put his arms around her and said, "I am unbelievably lucky to have you."

Minerva was smiling back at him. Her eyes said everything he wanted to know: she loved him, and she wanted him, and she wanted to be the mother of his child.

He took a step away from her, towards the bed.

"Come," he said, and stretched out a hand.

[illegible]

Minerva woke early the next morning. Dumbledore was still asleep, lying on his back with one arm and one leg sprawled over her. She reached up and grasped his hand, then turned over to look into his face. She was filled with an indescribable tenderness, and she reached out to gently touch his face. The realization of how very old he looked dawned on her as her fingers stroked his beard. He made a soft noise in his sleep and inched closer to her. She put both arms around him now, and choked back a sob that held all her love for this man and all her sudden fears. Dumbledore seemed quite sure he could still father a child, but could he really? Maybe the previous night's activities had all amounted to nothing.

_No, _Minerva told herself firmly. _Even if I'm not pregnant it wasn't for nothing. I gave Albus a part of myself last night, and I wouldn't take that back for anything.

— —

_ But what if . . . her mind whispered. Dumbledore was extremely old. It was unlikely that he would live to see his child go to Hogwarts, much less grow up. Could she raise his child without him? Would the child be her comfort and joy if Dumbledore died, or would it bring back too many memories? There were too many unanswerable questions, the worst of which was, How much time did she have left with this new husband of hers?

He stirred and opened his eyes. Minerva leaned over and kissed him on his bearded cheek, then whispered, "Good morning, husband."

His eyes lit up at the prospect of another day ahead of him, another with Minerva in it. He raised himself up into a sitting position.

"Shall we go to beach this morning?" he asked.

"Of course," Minerva replied. Her fears were unfounded. Dumbledore had years ahead of him. She just hoped that the pregnancy test would be positive.

[illegible]

Sometime later, as they were getting ready to go the beach, Dumbledore produced a plastic bag with the air of Father Christmas taking a particularly large toy from his sack.

"Open it," he said, gesturing excitedly. Minerva took one look at his face and opened the bag, ignoring the pangs of trepidation that were making themselves known to her. She put a hand into the bag as if expecting to encounter a poisonous snake and drew out a skimpy-looking, lime green bikini. It dangled from her hands like limp seaweed as she stared at it in consternation.

"Go on, put it on," he urged her.

"What is it?" she asked, looking at it as if it were the interesting though vile-smelling result of a scientific experiment.

Dumbledore's face fell. "It's a bathing suit," he said.

Minerva surveyed it in dismay. "You want me to wear this?" She held it up to her body. "But €" it will only cover about a sixteenth of me! "

Dumbledore's look brightened. "I know," he said eagerly. "That's why I bought it."

Minerva gave up. She took the bikini into the bathroom with a resigned expression on her face, and put it on.

The expression on her face had not changed when she came out again, except that resignation was now mingled with disgust.

Dumbledore's eyebrows went up so high they threatened to disappear under his silver hair, and he let out a loud whistle. Minerva glared at him.

"Do be quiet," she said.

Dumbledore grinned and didn't reply. He changed into his swimming trunks, and half an hour later Minerva found herself on the beach, lying on a beach towel. She had grown used to the skimpy bathing suit, but it still gave her pause whenever some guy happened to glance her way.

Dumbledore had gone into the ocean for a while, leaving Minerva behind. She was slightly wary of braving the waves in this bathing suit. She wasn't sure if it would stay on. However, that was preferable to lying here and feeling self-conscious.

So she got up and headed for the water, but before she had gone more than a few steps she ran smack into a man who seemed to appear out of nowhere. She caught a whiff of alcohol on his breath before she recovered herself and stepped back.

"Oh, I'm sorry," she said, and started to turn away.

"That's all right," he replied, and he moved over to block her way to the ocean, bringing her to a standstill again. He was taller than her by about half a head, and looked immensely muscular.

"Actually," he said, "I'm glad we bumped into each other. You're the nicest-looking woman I've seen on this beach yet."

"Er, thank you," said Minerva, flustered. "Now, if you'll excuse me. . ."

He put a hand on her arm to detain her, and she took a step back, eyeing him. "Leaving so soon?" he said. "We haven't even got to know each other yet. What's your sign?"

"If you'll excuse me," Minerva said as politely as she could, but he ignored her and kept speaking.

"I'm Greg. Could I buy you a drink or something?"

"Er, no," said Minerva firmly.

He looked slightly surprised. "No? I really know how to please a woman." He was slurring his words now, and Minerva looked around for an escape route. She could see what was coming next, but Greg still had his hand on her arm, and she wasn't sure what he would do if she just pulled away and left.

"Your place or mine?" he said, and at that moment Minerva felt a presence behind her. Dumbledore draped his arm over her shoulders. He looked curiously at Greg and said "Shall we dance, my dear?"

With that extraordinary question, he took Minerva's other arm, wrenched it out of Greg's grip, and waltzed away with her towards the ocean.

The waves were rather strong, but with one hand hovering in front of her bathing suit and the other grasping Dumbledore's forearm, Minerva felt at least a little safer. She even went underwater during a lull in waves, and Dumbledore eventually persuaded her to ride a few waves.

After a while, though, she got tired of monitoring the position of her swimwear and they decided to get out of the water. They packed up the chairs and headed back to the 'Rolling Waves'.

They were both hungry by now, so Dumbledore ordered a pizza, to be delivered to their room, then banished Minerva to the bathroom while waiting. She rolled eyes and went to take a shower. When she got out, she found the proverbial little black dress on the counter instead of the clothes she had left there. She pursed her lips, holding it up, then sighed and put it on, though why Dumbledore wanted her to wear a dress for them to eat pizza together was a mystery to her.

The pizza was there, laid out on a small table, and the only light came from candles. Dumbledore had put on some soft classical music, and was wearing crisp trousers and an ironed polo shirt.

"Oh, yes I do," Minerva muttered, but Greg was going on.

"An old git like that can't give a woman what she wants. Don't you want to sleep with someone who'll give you a little pleasure? Come on, baby, admit it, you â€" "

Minerva slapped him across the face. "For your information, you goddamn fucking bastard," she hissed, "my husband got me pregnant a month ago, and as for sleeping with you, I wouldn't touch your filthy ass with a ten-foot pole. My husband may be old, but he can still show me more pleasure than you ever could!"

Greg's drunken features contorted. "I'll give you pleasure," he growled. He seized Minerva around the waist and forcibly pressed his mouth to hers. Before Minerva had time to react, he had his hands down her shorts.

She bit his lip, hard, relishing the taste of his blood in her mouth, and at the same time brought up her knee. It hit him in the groin with great force. He let out a howl and jumped back, and suddenly Dumbledore was there behind him.

"Is something wrong?" he asked calmly. "May I help you, sir?"
> Greg blundered around to face him. "I'm just trying to help your wife, here. She needs to know what a real man is, not just some infertile old prat like you who'll keep her locked up as your toy her whole life."<p>

Minerva saw the spasm of anger in Dumbledore's clenched jaw, but only because she was looking for it. His face remained impassive except for that spasm of tightened muscles.

"I'm afraid I must ask you to leave us now," he said. Greg made no effort to leave; on the contrary, he looked again to Minerva and said, "I'll take her with me. I'll show her what a real man can do in a bed, and we'll see if you still have a wife when I'm done."

"Get out of my way, you drunken half-wit," Minerva snapped. She started to push past him to Dumbledore's side, and everything seemed to happen at once.

Greg grabbed at her again, and Dumbledore lost his temper this time. His fist took Greg full in the face, breaking his nose in a single blow. At that moment one of the bartenders seemed to materialize next to them.

"What's going on here?" he demanded, staring from Greg's bloody nose to Minerva's rumpled hair and clothing to Dumbledore, who was rubbing his knuckles.

"Nothing to worry about," Minerva said. "Just the usual bloody git trying to pick up a married woman. Now, if you'll excuse us." She swept out of the room, daring Dumbledore with a frigid glance not to follow.

Once outside, he hurried to her side and laid his hand on her arm. "Are you all right?" he said anxiously.

"Get your hand off me," she said. "I'm not fit for you to touch." She

shook him off and headed for the bed-and-breakfast. Once there, she told Dumbledore that she was going to take a shower. He seized her wrists.

"Minerva," he said urgently. "He didn't hurt you, did he? Tell me the truth."

"I hurt him more than he hurt me," Minerva said honestly. "He kissed me and he had his hands in my shorts, but he didn't actually hurt me. Now, please, Albus, I feel unclean. I don't want you to touch me until I've showered."

Twenty minutes later, Minerva returned, changed into a freshly laundered nightdress, and looking more refreshed and relaxed.

"You can touch me now," she said. "And please do â€" wipe away the memory of that awful man."

Dumbledore obliged her gladly, and for a time all was bliss between them.

His words, spoken some time later, startled Minerva out of her reverie.

"You don't think me an infertile old prat, do you?"

Minerva said nothing for a moment, completely taken aback. Then she kissed him gently on the lips and said, "I think you're anything but an infertile old prat, Albus."

"And you won't ever regret that you married an old man?"

Minerva sat up abruptly. "Albus," she said, "Don't ever doubt my love for you. I'll never, ever regret that I married you. You are the only man in the world for me, and my mind could hardly be changed by some drunken git in a tavern." She lowered her face to his. "I love you, Albus Albert Dumbledore, and don't you ever forget it."

"You're a dream come true for me," he muttered hoarsely, and all was bliss once more.

[illegible]

The rest of their honeymoon passed with much love and laughter. They ate ice cream at Springer's, danced on the beach at dawn, and did things all newlyweds do.

When the time came to leave, they packed up their belongings and said goodbye to Stone Harbor with fondness but not regret. Neither of them could wait to get back to the wizarding world.

They took the plane back to London and then Apparated into Hogsmeade. Snape met them with a horse drawn carriage and drove them back. Before they entered the carriage, Snape handed Dumbledore a folded copy of the Daily Prophet. Dumbledore gave him a quizzical look, but he said nothing, just climbed up on the front of the carriage and took up the reins. Dumbledore and Minerva got into the carriage and started to unfold the newspaper. Snape clucked to the horses, and

they moved off.

Dumbledore found what he was looking for on the front page â€" a huge photo of him kissing Minerva at their wedding. Next to it was the accompanying article.

ALBUS DUMBLEDORE TAKES THE PLUNGE â€"

IS IT TOO DEEP?

Albus Dumbledore, Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, has finally 'taken the plunge', _writes Rita Skeeter, Special Correspondent._

--

Yes, after over one hundred years of life, Dumbledore has gotten married. He was united for life with Minerva McGonagall, Professor of Transfiguration and Deputy Headmistress, at a church near Oxford. The pair is honeymooning in the United States, in Muggle New Jersey.

Dumbledore has always been overly fond of Muggles, and taking his new wife to live among them for two weeks is only his latest way of demonstrating that.

This author has obtained inside information from a reliable source saying that McGonagall seduced Dumbledore for her own purposes. This author also believes it to be a sign of the old wizard's degeneration that he fell for it.

"She did it very slowly and cleverly, I'll give her that," says one witness. Another says, "He's totally infatuated with her, but it's obvious she doesn't care a jot for him."

After all, your author has it on good authority that the difference in their ages is more than seventy years.

Some people, however, stand up for the two of them and their unlikely love.

"Minerva McGonagall is a very honest person, and she loves Dumbledore with all her heart," insists Poppy Pomfrey, nurse at Hogwarts, while Severus Snape claims that "they were meant for each other" and it is a "measure of their courage that they can pursue their relationship despite the massive age difference."

This author believes that Professor Snape wishes that he had been so "courageous" before it was too late.

Your author doubts the sentiments of Snape and Pomfrey, however, and would like to add as parting thought that Sybil Trelawney, Hogwarts Divination teacher, says that Dumbledore and McGonagall are astrologically incompatible.

And the stars never lie.

There was silence in the carriage as Minerva and Dumbledore looked at each other over the newspaper. Then Dumbledore burst into laughter, joined by Minerva.

They laughed so hard that tears came to their eyes, and they didn't stop laughing until they had pulled up outside Hogwarts.

[illegible]

Once they were free from all the well wishers and in Minerva's bedroom, Minerva and Dumbledore addressed a certain issue very eagerly.

Minerva emerged from the bathroom with a teary smile on her face. She ran to Dumbledore and collapsed in his arms. He held her until she could speak properly.

"Oh, Albus, I'm to be a mother after all these years of wishing. It's finally come true!"

"So, we really are having a child?"

"Yes, dear, we are!" she announced with pride.

The couple danced across the floor, giddy with this new batch of happiness.

Ah, this was going to be a wonderful life for them.

A/N - I apologize for the Briticisms in Greg's speech. I got carried away. And they're OOC, I know. My mother gets credit for the dancing on the beach. Stone Harbor and everything in it really exists and is accurately described (except for Fred's Tavern, perhaps - it's real but I've never been inside it). The only other exception is the bed-and-breakfast. The house exists, but it's just a house. Oh, and none of this belongs to me, except for Greg and the unborn child. I hope you enjoyed part two of this odd story. There will be a part three, whether you want it or not!

End
file.